

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 05111 221929Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 5111

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, PINT, CGEN, CPAS, CVIS, GE, GW, WB, US

SUBJECT: "GERMANY" IN DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT

REF: (A) BERLIN 5081; (B) STATE 013859

1. ON JANUARY 22, THE DCM HAD A PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH DR. GEYER OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ALONG THE LINES OF PARAGRAPH 6 (REF A). GEYER LISTENED TO THIS EXPOSITION CAREFULLY AND SAID HE APPRECIATED A CANDID EXPLANATION OF THE US POSITION.

2. WITH SOME CANDOR ON HIS SIDE, HE SAID THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S CHIEF CONCERN WAS THAT THE DESIGNATION OF "GERMANY" IN RACHEL BISHOP'S DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT WAS INTENDED TO HAVE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF A KIND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT BELIEVED HAD BEEN OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS. THE EAST GERMAN GOVERNMENT COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT MEANING THE DESIGNATION OF "GERMANY" HAD IN LIGHT OF FULL AND NORMAL US RELATIONS WITH THE FRG AND GDR. IT FEARED THAT THIS DESIGNATION REFLECTED A "HARD-LINE HOPE" THAT A SINGLE GERMANY MIGHT RE-EMERGE IN EUROPE. THE DCM COUNTERED THIS VIEW, STATING THAT THE PRACTICE OF THE DESIGNATION OF A BIRTHPLACE IN THE FRG AS "GERMANY" WAS A LONGSTANDING AND NON-POLITICAL US PROCEDURE. THE BURDEN OF THE US ARGUMENT WAS THAT IF THE EAST GERMANS HAD POLITICAL CONCERNS THEY SHOULD BE DISCUSSED IN A POLITICAL CONTEXT, AND THAT

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BERLIN 05111 221929Z

RACHEL BISHOP'S PASSPORT WAS A POOR AND

INAPPROPRIATE VEHICLE FOR THIS KIND OF DIALOGUE.

3. IF THE ARGUMENT WE HAVE ADVANCED WAS PERSUASIVE, WE BELIEVE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL SOON RETURN RACHEL BISHOP'S PASSPORT, PROPERLY VISAED, WITH A STATE-MENT THAT ITS ACTION DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A PRECEDENT, NOR DOES IT PREJUDICE EAST GERMAN VIEWS ON THE NATIONALITY QUESTION. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT AT SUCH TIME THE USG WOULD ALSO BE ASKED TO CONSIDER THE GDR'S POSITION REGARDING THE PROBLEM OF DESIGNATION OF BIRTHPLACE ON THE MERITS OF POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

4. IF THE ARGUMENT FAILED TO CONVINCE, THE EMBASSY, AFTER AN APPROPRIATE WAIT TO DETERMINE THE RESULTS OF THIS DISCUSSION, WILL RECOMMEND FURTHER STEPS FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S CONSIDERATION. COOPER

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